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1 — Navajo Nation confiscates water tanks after mine spill, Albuquerque Journal, 8/20/2015

<http://www.abqjournal.com/631160/news/navajo-nation-confiscates-water-tanks-after-mine-spill.html>

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye on Wednesday ordered tribal police to confiscate water tanks delivered to Shiprock that were intended to hold water that residents could use to irrigate crops and water livestock.

2 — Navajo president may lift advisory on river water, Albuquerque Journal, 8/21/2015

<http://www.abqjournal.com/631831/news/navajo-president-may-lift-advisory-on-river-water.html>

The quality of San Juan River water on the Navajo Nation has returned to what it was before a spill at a Colorado gold mine sent toxic sludge into the waterway, federal officials said Thursday.

3 — EPA Downplays Dangers of Mine Spill, but Concerns Linger, ABC News, 8/20/2015

<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/epa-downplays-dangers-mine-spill-concerns-linger-33215284>

More than two weeks after a mine spill fouled waterways in several Western states, officials expressed concern Thursday over the long-term effects of contaminated river bottoms as the federal agency that triggered the accident downplayed the dangers.

4 — EPA's methane crackdown wins endorsement from oil icon's Texas foundation, Houston Chronicle, 8/20/2015

<http://fuelfix.com/blog/2015/08/20/epas-methane-crackdown-wins-endorsement-from-oil-icons-texas-foundation/#2572101=0>

The Obama administration just won an unlikely ally in its push to slash methane emissions from oil wells and gas processing facilities. The philanthropic organization that is a legacy of George Mitchell, the "father of fracking," endorsed the proposal as a "prudent regulatory strategy."

5 — Railroad Commission Chairman: Proposed EPA methane cuts are weapon in "war on fossil fuels", San Antonio Business Journal, 8/20/2015

<http://www.bizjournals.com/sanantonio/news/2015/08/20/railroad-commission-chairman-proposed-epa-methane.html>

Texas Railroad Commission Chairman David Porter is calling the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposed cuts to methane emissions in the oil and natural gas sector a weapon in the "war on fossil fuels."

6 — Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins, Crow urge action on CO2, Dallas Morning News, 8/20/2015

<http://www.dallasnews.com/news/metro/20150820-dallas-county-judge-clay-jenkins-crow-urge-action-on-co2.ece>

The EPA's sweeping rule aimed at slashing climate-warming emissions from coal got a boost Thursday from Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins and Dallas philanthropist and businessman Trammell S. Crow.

7 — Methane regulations good for investors as well as the climate, Houston Chronicle, 8/20/2015

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/columnists/tomlinson/article/Methane-regulations-good-for-investors-as-well-as-6455605.php>

Natural gas producers have a choice to make: contribute to the problem of climate change and look greedy or become part of the solution, appear forward-thinking and make more money.

8 — Paxton Asks EPA to Halt Global Warming Plan, Texas Tribune, 8/20/2015

<http://www.texastribune.org/2015/08/20/paxton-asks-epa-stay/>

Renewing his vow to sue if the answer is no, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on Thursday officially asked the Environmental Protection Agency to halt a sweeping plan designed to combat climate change while existing legal challenges from other states play out.

9 — Commentary: Fossil Fuels are the Solution, Not the Problem, Houston Chronicle, 8/20/2015

<http://fuelfix.com/blog/2015/08/20/fossil-fuels-are-the-solution-not-the-problem/>

The George C. Marshall Institute has recently released a study on fossil fuels and the economic well-being. It describes why energy is an essential input to economic activity. Because fossil fuels are such a large part of the world's energy supply, they play a dominant role in enabling people everywhere to enjoy a higher standard of living and greater personal freedom.

10 — In our best interest: Clean Water Rule common sense (opinion), Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 8/21/2015

<http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2015/aug/21/in-our-best-interest-20150821/>

The Obama administration's testing of regulatory limits is disrupting business activity, Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt said Wednesday.

11 — New Orleans' post-Katrina repairs pose lead poisoning threat, magazine says, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 8/19/2015

http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2015/08/post-katrina_renovations_pose.html#incart_most_shared-environment

Lead poisoning remains a threat to children in New Orleans ten years after Hurricane Katrina, thanks to the exposure of a new generation of children during the sanding of old paint in post-storm renovations, according to an online article published Wednesday in National Geographic.

12 — Louisiana identifies tentative restoration projects for BP spill money, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 8/20/2015

http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2015/08/identifies_tentative_restorati.html#incart_most_shared-environment

A tentative list of projects that would be funded by \$7.2 billion in BP oil spill fine and settlement money was announced by Louisiana officials on Wednesday (Aug. 19).

13 — Military-grade chemical detection system to help Pointe Coupee deal with possible disasters, chemical releases, Baton Rouge Advocate, 8/21/2015

<http://theadvocate.com/news/13229335-123/military-grade-chemical-detection-system-to>

Pointe Coupee Parish is arming itself with military-grade technology that will give its local emergency response teams the ability to detect hazardous chemical threats even before many state agencies.

14 — Coming to a Mine Near You: Why Another Toxic Spill Is Inevitable, Houston Chronicle, 8/21/2015

<http://www.chron.com/living/mensjournal/article/Coming-to-a-Mine-Near-You-Why-Another-Toxic-6455679.php>

The Gold King disaster is nothing new to the West, where many towns, including Silverton, have been suffering from regular spills from acid mine drainage into creeks for more than a century.

15 — Well-water test results mailed to San Juan Co. residents, KOB, 8/20/2015

<http://www.kob.com/article/stories/s3884473.shtml#.VdcvAs9Viko>

The New Mexico Environment Department on Thursday said the results of domestic well water testing are being mailed to around 570 residents of San Juan County following the Gold King Mine spill.

16 — Sewer rate increases higher than expected, Plano Star Courier, 8/20/2015

http://starlocalmedia.com/planocourier/sewer-rate-increases-higher-than-expected/article_7c1d1cde-476f-11e5-b930-cfe67c18259d.html

Plano water customers are likely to see a 10 percent increase to their wastewater rates starting in November, city staff members said Saturday.

17 — Food Waste And Beef Fat Will Be Making Airplanes Soar, Texas Public Radio, 8/20/2015

<http://tpr.org/post/food-waste-and-beef-fat-will-be-making-airplanes-soar#stream/0>

What do beef tallow and manure have in common with t-shirts and pine needles? Turns out you can make high-quality, low-carbon transportation fuel with all of them.

Navajo Nation confiscates water tanks after mine spill

Noel Lyn Smith / The Daily Times

FARMINGTON — Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye on Wednesday ordered tribal police to confiscate water tanks delivered to Shiprock that were intended to hold water that residents could use to irrigate crops and water livestock.

Tribal officials were concerned about what they said was contamination in the tanks.

The tanks were needed after more than 3 million gallons of toxic wastewater was accidentally released Aug. 5 from the Gold King Mine north of Silverton, Colo., into the Animas and San Juan rivers. Officials along the rivers, including those with the Navajo Nation, had closed access to the rivers and warned against using the water for any purpose. Most restrictions had been lifted by Wednesday, but Nation officials were still waiting for testing results.

Begaye said in a telephone interview on Wednesday that he made his decision to confiscate the tanks after visiting three tank sites and after discussing the situation with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials, even though they assured him the tanks were suitable to store water.

The president said during his inspection, he filled a cup with water from one of the tanks then noticed unknown material floating in the water.

"So what I was told was a complete lie," Begaye said, adding that the tanks will be kept as evidence and will not be hauled from the Navajo Nation.

In the meantime, the president said new tanks will be delivered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Region in cooperation with the EPA. He said the EPA agreed to use water from Navajo Agricultural Products Industry rather than from the city of Bloomfield, which had been supplying water.

The president's decision comes after Shiprock Chapter's farm board member, Joe Ben Jr., complained about the condition of 11 tanks delivered to the chapter by Triple S Trucking.

Jason Sandel, executive vice president of Triple S Trucking, said the company was hired by Environmental Quality Management on behalf of the EPA, to deliver the tanks.

"We are doing the job that we were hired to do and in the best of our ability," Sandel said in a telephone interview on Wednesday.

He explained that each tank holds 16,800 gallons and said they are being used to hold non-potable water.

Non-potable water is meant to be used for irrigation and watering livestock but not for drinking.

Sandel said since the mine spill, the company hauled tanks to areas from the Colorado-New Mexico state line to the Navajo Nation, including deliveries to Aztec and Kirtland.

"We've been delivering tanks all over the county without complaint," he said.

On Tuesday, Ben said Triple S Trucking delivered and placed the tanks at Chief Hill, Salt Wash, Area 3 East, Area 3 West, the Northern Navajo Nation Fairgrounds, and near the chapter house.

He alleges the tanks are not suitable for irrigation or livestock because he noticed water from the tanks was brown and had a noticeable film and odor.

"We are seasoned farmers. We know what we are talking about. We grew up playing in the mud," Ben said while examining a pool of water at the base of one of the tanks at Area 3 East. The tank was labeled with signs stating, "Non Potable Water" and "Caution: Do not use until further notice." The advisory not to use the water was posted by Nation officials.

Rusty Harris-Bishop, a public information officer in the Joint Information Center in Durango, Colo., said in a statement on Wednesday that following the closure of the San Juan River by the Navajo Nation, the EPA's Region 9 worked to provide alternative agricultural and livestock water supplies for community members in Shiprock.

Harris-Bishop explained the water distributed by the EPA was provided by the city of Bloomfield's utility company and met all applicable federal and state water quality standards.

The tanks were used for “the exclusive distribution of non-potable water” and the EPA will comply with the tribe’s request to use a water source permitted on the Navajo Nation, he wrote.

In a follow up call on Wednesday morning, Harris-Bishop said 13 tanks were delivered to the chapters of Shiprock, Upper Fruitland and Gadii’ahi-Tokoi. He did not provide further details and said the EPA was working on a press release about the issue.

On Wednesday afternoon, a video featuring the tribe’s attorney general, Ethel Branch, was posted on the president’s Facebook page.

In the video, Branch states that the administration had a meeting on Monday with an EPA official who said there was no issue with the tanks.

“We’ve had repeated conversations with this EPA official, he’s repeatedly confirmed these tanks are fine,” she said.

Branch goes on to explain that the president inspected one of the tanks on Wednesday.

She then holds a white cup containing yellowish water up to the camera and says, “You can see the little floating things. If you take those out and you rub them it streaks. It’s clearly oil.”

She explains that she and Begaye, who stood next to her, placed their hands on a portion of the tank where water comes out and their hands were darkened.

“That is clearly oil. There’s oil in these tanks. We don’t trust the EPA to be here. They need to get out of our nation. Send the dollars directly here, let us take care of these issues ourselves because we care about the health and welfare of our people,” Branch said.

With the tribe’s irrigation and ditch systems shut down, Mitten Rock residents Byron and Tonita Nelson were using delivered water to irrigate their squash, melons and corn, which they were growing on 11.8 acres they lease in Shiprock.

The couple drove to Farmington on Monday and purchased a large plastic water tank, a gas powered pump, a hose and fuel. After filling the tank with non-potable water from the station set up by the BIA Navajo Region at the Shiprock rodeo grounds, they pumped the water to start irrigating a field on Tuesday.

“We’re trying to keep our plants alive. ...It’s a way of life for us. It’s what we’ve learned,” Byron said.

“It gave us a lot of things,” Tonita said while looking at the plants.

She said during a recent sale, some customers were skeptical about purchasing the produce and asked if it came from contaminated plants.

After answering their questions, she said, “Slowly, they’ll trust us then they’ll buy.”

Noel Lyn Smith covers the Navajo Nation for The Daily Times. She can be reached at 505-564-4636 and nsmith@daily-times.com. Follow her [@nsmithdt](#) on Twitter.

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Navajo president may lift advisory on river water

Felicia Fonseca / The Associated Press



The quality of San Juan River water on the Navajo Nation has returned to what it was before a spill at a Colorado gold mine sent toxic sludge into the waterway, federal officials said Thursday.

The testing by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency along with that of the Navajo EPA has prompted tribal President Russell Begaye to consider lifting an advisory against using the river to water crops.

Begaye has said he would not advise hundreds of farmers on the Navajo Nation to do so until the tribe's own testing declared the river safe.

Those results were to be provided at a meeting later Thursday with farmers in Shiprock, tribal spokesman Mihio Manus said.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said testing of surface water collected over a week in Hogback showed water quality at the same levels as those measured before the mine waste reached the reservation. The agency has taken full responsibility for the Aug. 5 spill at the Gold King Mine.

Manus said Begaye will talk with farmers about flushing irrigation canals and possibly opening them up this weekend.

The EPA said it will provide technical assistance.

Hundreds of Navajos farm along the San Juan River grow squash, melons, corn and other crops to sustain their families and to sell at roadside stands and a tribal fair in October in Shiprock.

After the spill, federal agencies, including the EPA and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, arranged for water to be hauled to tribal communities and hay to be delivered for livestock.

Not all the water has been welcomed.

Shiprock farm board member Joe Ben Jr. complained that water coming from tanks delivered by an EPA contractor contained oil and didn't smell right.

Begaye and Navajo Attorney General Ethel Branch went to Shiprock to look at the tanks a day after farmers voted to reject the water. Branch and Begaye placed their hands inside the area where hoses hook up to the tanks, and their hands came out partially black, according to a video the president's office posted on its Facebook page.

"That is clearly oil," Branch said. "We don't trust the EPA to be here. They need to get out of our nation, send the dollars directly here. Let us take care of these issues ourselves, because we care about the health and welfare of our people."

Manus said tribal officials were testing the water from three of the tanks that were being held by tribal police.

The EPA said it would provide an alternate water source from within the reservation but didn't directly address questions regarding the holding tanks.

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and Begaye spoke Wednesday about water quality in the river and agreed to have EPA cease water deliveries Friday for agricultural use on the reservation, the EPA and Manus said.

The agency said it would work with the Navajo Nation on a monitoring plan for the river.

Ben said he wouldn't support a return to using the canals to water crops, because not enough is known about the impact to the soil.



EPA Downplays Dangers of Mine Spill, but Concerns Linger

EPA downplays dangers of mine spill that fouled Western rivers, but health concerns persist

By MATTHEW BROWN

The Associated Press

More than two weeks after a mine spill fouled waterways in several Western states, officials expressed concern Thursday over the long-term effects of contaminated river bottoms as the federal agency that triggered the accident downplayed the dangers.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency workers released more than 3 million gallons of contaminated water Aug. 5 while investigating an inactive mine site near Silverton, Colorado. The spill prompted the shutdown of public drinking-water systems and left rivers in the region tinged a disturbing yellow-orange color that has since faded.

The EPA said in recent days that poisons including lead and thallium have been detected in river sediment samples collected from the Animas River, which travels from Colorado into northern New Mexico, joining the San Juan River before emptying into Lake Powell along the Utah-Arizona border.

In Colorado, contaminants exceeding drinking-water standards were found in seven private wells out of more than 100 tested, according to the EPA. Details on what contaminants were found and at what concentrations were not disclosed. Officials said Thursday that they would continue to investigate the wells, but noted that it was not clear if the spill was to blame.

EPA officials have repeatedly said sediment contamination was returning to pre-spill levels and no longer threatens recreational river users on the upper Animas or water treatment plants.

But state health officials were more cautious as they attempted to nail down the potential for long-term damage to private drinking wells and aquatic life, from the heavy metals and other contaminants that dropped out of the passing plume.

Experts warn that sediments could be stirred up from river bottoms by storms or during the annual spring runoff, when snow at high elevations in the Rocky Mountains melts.

The sediment contains thallium, a naturally occurring metal that can cause hair loss and kidney or liver problems, as well as lead, which can delay mental development in children.

"We are concerned about this particular sediment load given how the various constituents in the sediment may continue to affect the stream," Colorado health officials said in a statement released by Jan Stapleman,

spokeswoman for the state Department of Public Health and the Environment.

The officials added that there was "ongoing potential for those (private) wells to be affected as the sediment migrates into the groundwater table." It could take years to gather enough data to accurately gauge the extent of problems for fish and other aquatic life, they said.

In Utah, scientists from the state Department of Environmental Quality said tests to date suggested the water in the San Juan River presents little health risk to users. Agency officials said they were turning to a long-term monitoring strategy focusing on sediment and what, if any, steps can be taken to deal with it.

In the interim, Utah health officials warned river visitors not to drink the water and to minimize contact with dirt and sand.

In New Mexico, environmental regulators monitoring the sediment said the threat it posed was an "open question" that required long-term investigation.

After tumbling from the heights of Colorado's Rockies, the Animas slows as it enters New Mexico, allowing more sediment to drop out of the water column and onto the river bottom, said Bruce Yurdin, a water quality expert with the New Mexico Environment Department.

Contaminants can be taken up by insects living on the bottom, which are then consumed by fish and ultimately by people fishing on the popular waterway.

Yet it could be difficult to distinguish problems caused by the EPA's spill from the long history of contamination flowing from upstream mines, Yurdin said.

Thirty-eight private water wells have been sampled in New Mexico, according to the EPA. Results of those tests were not provided.

Arizona wildlife officials planned to test the tissue of fish from Lake Powell for potential contaminants.

Despite repeated requests from The Associated Press, the EPA has not released further information on the pre-spill contamination levels in the Animas and San Juan rivers, which would shed light on how much things have changed.

EPA spokeswoman Lisa McClain-Vanderpool said the agency planned to release more information on sediments soon.

Navajo President Russell Begaye visited Silverton over the weekend and poured water over sediment settling on the banks of the river. He watched as yellowish sediment flowed over the rocks and downstream.

"These are things I'm concerned about, is what happens when the rain comes," Begaye said in a video posted on his office's Facebook page.

Tribal spokesman Mihio Manus said the president was considering lifting an advisory Saturday against using the San Juan River for irrigation. The EPA planned to end water deliveries for agriculture to the reservation on Friday.

The Interior Department, which is conducting an independent review of the spill at the EPA's request, said Thursday that it expects to deliver a final report by late October.

The probe will be overseen by Interior's Bureau of Reclamation.

Associated Press writer Felicia Fonseca in Flagstaff, Arizona, contributed to this report.

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EPA's methane crackdown wins endorsement from oil icon's Texas foundation

Posted on August 20, 2015 | By Jennifer A. Dlouhy

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In April 2010, businessman and philanthropist George Mitchell attends an event in The Woodlands. Mitchell died in 2013. (AP Photo/Conroe Courier, Eric S. Swist)

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration just won an unlikely ally in its push to slash methane emissions from oil wells and gas processing facilities.

The philanthropic organization that is a legacy of George Mitchell, the “father of fracking,” endorsed the proposal as a “prudent regulatory strategy.”

The Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation’s move breaks with oil and gas industry leaders who say the rules would hike costs and throttle domestic energy development.

The Environmental Protection Agency proposal “is a critical step in protecting health and the environment,” the group said in a statement released late Wednesday.

The Texas-based foundation has funded research on methane emissions, and one of its four main grant-making programs is in “shale sustainability,” supporting work with the potential to boost the sustainability of extracting oil and gas from dense shale rock formations.

But the foundation has never made such a big pronouncement on public policy — despite some requests to weigh in on other issues.

Marilu Hastings, vice president of the foundation's sustainability program, said the issue was so important leaders of the philanthropy felt it had to make a public statement.

The statement reflects Mitchell's belief that energy companies always have to “take it one step above,” and “operators have to push technology beyond where we are now,” Hastings said.

Mitchell, who died in 2013, pioneered the combined use of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling in North Texas' Barnett shale, helping give birth to a domestic energy renaissance. Late in life, he devoted some of his wealth to scientific research and conservation.

“He wanted to capture the full environmental, economic, health and national security benefits of natural gas as a fuel to produce power but (believed) it has to be produced in a responsible,

prudent manner," Hastings said. "And one of the ways we do that so it is a fuel that really has the environmental benefits that we want it to have is to manage methane responsibly."

In its formal statement, the Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation stressed that the oil and gas industry has already made "important progress" cutting emissions of methane, a greenhouse gas that is 25 times more powerful than carbon dioxide at warming the atmosphere. And the foundation said the EPA's proposal would dramatically expand the industry's existing, voluntary work to find and close methane leaks.

Energy companies already have to use "green completions" technology on new and modified hydraulically fractured natural gas wells, under a 2012 EPA mandate. Other producers and pipeline companies have invested in monitoring technology and infrared cameras to help locate leaks.

But the foundation suggested that voluntary programs can only do so much — and they noted that much of the industry's recent methane emission reductions have come as a result of the 2012 green completions rule.

"While some industry leaders are already implementing aspects of the proposed rules, the number of oil and gas companies that aggressively control their methane emissions must increase," the philanthropy said. "The proposed rules, when finalized, will play a critical role in diffusing voluntary efforts and innovative technologies throughout the oil and gas industry."

Although energy companies stopped short of endorsing the proposed rule, some have taken pains to emphasize their ongoing work to capture methane.

Houston-based Southwestern Energy said it is reviewing the proposed rules with an eye on ensuring they "provide sufficient flexibility to achieve meaningful cost-effective reductions."

But the firm noted its involvement as a founding member of the ONE Future coalition — a group of eight firms that is working to identify policy and technical solutions for managing methane emissions.

"We are committed to continuous improvements and believe sound science leads to good policy," Southwestern Energy said.

Cabot Oil & Gas stressed an ongoing, four-year campaign to slash methane emissions, crediting it with paring them by 85 percent through 2014 even as production grew 250 percent.

Related story: Cabot uses natural gas to power fracturing

Because the Houston-based firm has major gas production in the Marcellus shale formation its new gas wells are subject to the EPA's 2012 green completions rule.

To minimize gas flaring at wells, the company built out its pipeline system and orchestrated its drilling program to follow the growth of that network, said Cabot spokesman George Stark.

Stark said the firm has engineered production sites with "enhanced emission controls" and has welded natural gas lines instead of using threaded connections to minimize fugitive emissions.

"All of these efforts were made to help us produce efficiently and effectively while capturing every methane molecule possible," Stark said. "We don't see the new rules altering our aggressive actions that have already produced a sizable reduction."

Fracking and natural gas drilling



IMAGE 1 OUT OF 20

Associated Press

Mike Shuster, left, and Lisa Zaccaglini, both of Sharon Springs, N.Y., hold signs during a rally against hydraulic fracturing for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale region of the state, at the Capitol in Albany, N.Y., on Monday, April 11, 2011. (AP Photo/Mike Groll)

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Railroad Commission Chairman: Proposed EPA methane cuts are weapon in "war on fossil fuels"

Aug 20, 2015, 12:13pm CDT



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Texas Railroad Commission Chairman [David Porter](#) is calling the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's** proposed cuts to methane emissions in the oil and natural gas sector a weapon in the "war on fossil fuels."

Just earlier this week, the EPA said it wants to cut methane emissions from oil wells and natural gas facilities by 40 to 45 percent by 2025 through improved leak detection and capture technology.

The proposed changes are expected to cost between \$360 to \$420 million but are designed to produce \$460 to \$500 million in benefits through the sale of methane that would have otherwise been lost.

See Also

- [Natural gas industry calls methane cuts unnecessary, counterproductive](#)
- [Several Eagle Ford companies testing natural gas tech in San Antonio](#)
- [Environmentalists seeking natural gas export ban](#)

Environmentalists support the proposed cuts but the natural gas industry opposes it saying they are "unnecessary" and "counterproductive" due to cuts already made by producers, who already have an incentive to reduce waste through sales.

Porter issued a statement on Wednesday where he came out against the proposed cuts to methane.

"Like the Clean Power Plan, these burdensome rules will be used by the EPA as a weapon in

President Obama's war on fossil fuels," Porter said in his statement. "These excessive regulations are another blatant attack on the oil and gas industry that will further impede America's energy security, kill jobs and put even more stress on our national and state economies."

Texas Alliance of Energy Producers President Alex Mills noted that the cuts come at a time when the natural gas industry already cut emission by 35 percent and increased production by 22.5 percent.

"The new restrictions are not needed, and they are proposed only because environmental extremists and the Obama administration want to increase the cost of fossil fuels so that speculative fuels, such as wind and solar, will be able to compete for market share," Mills said.

Sergio Chapa covers the energy industry for the newspaper.

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Friday

The Dallas Morning News

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Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins, Crow urge action on CO2



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By RANDY LEE LOFTIS

Environmental Writer

Published: 20 August 2015 10:58 PM

Updated: 20 August 2015 11:03 PM

The EPA's sweeping rule aimed at slashing climate-warming emissions from coal got a boost Thursday from Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins and Dallas philanthropist and businessman Trammell S. Crow.

The two joined representatives of environmental and faith groups to ask Texas' top officials, including Gov. Greg Abbott, to stop opposing efforts to address climate change and start working on a Texas-specific solution to carbon dioxide pollution.

"I urge the governor and attorney general to stop the lawsuits" and craft a Texas-made plan to meet requirements of the federal Clean Power Plan, said Jenkins, a Democrat who is Dallas County's elected chief executive.

He cited health damage from higher temperatures and air pollution. "We can't sit on our hands and do nothing about the problem," he said.

Abbott's office did not respond to a request for comment. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has said he will sue the Environmental Protection Agency to block

the Clean Power Plan, which the agency finalized Aug. 3.

Environment Texas, a statewide environmental advocacy group, organized Thursday's event at the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center in South Dallas.

Crow, a developer and founder of Earth Day Texas, said unmitigated climate change threatens the Texas public, environment and economy with consequences that are "serious, dangerous, extreme — this is urgent."

Crow said opponents' warnings that the Clean Power Plan will damage the Texas economy are untrue. Both of the Republican officials have made that assertion.

If Texas takes advantage of its present opportunity to create a business-driven, market-based, Texas-specific solution, Crow said, the state can easily meet the emissions reductions required under the Clean Power Plan.

"We won't even break a sweat," he said.

The Clean Power Plan aims to reduce CO2 emissions from power plants nationwide by 32 percent from 2005 levels, and in Texas by 34 percent. The EPA assigned states different goals based on their particular mixes of

electricity sources and other factors.

The plan lets states choose their own ways of achieving the goals. State plans are due by Sept. 16, with two-year deadline extensions available. The EPA set a compliance date of 2022, two years later than in the initial proposal.

Texas options that Crow endorsed included encouraging more low- or zero-emissions wind and solar power. He also backed the creation of a Texas market for CO2 allowances that would provide economic incentives for power companies to cut their emissions.

A similar national market already has reduced power plants' sulphur dioxide emissions.

Follow Randy Lee Loftis on Twitter at @RandyLeeloftis.



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Methane regulations good for investors as well as the climate

By Chris Tomlinson | August 20, 2015 | Updated: August 20, 2015 3:57pm

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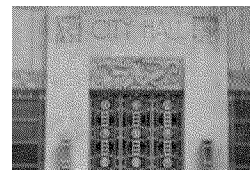
Natural gas producers have a choice to make: contribute to the problem of climate change and look greedy or become part of the solution, appear forward-thinking and make more money.

Oil and natural gas lobbyists predictably howled last week when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced new federal limits on emissions of methane, the key component of natural gas. But what the lobbyists will not admit is how much the industry and mineral rights holders could benefit from plugging

OPINION

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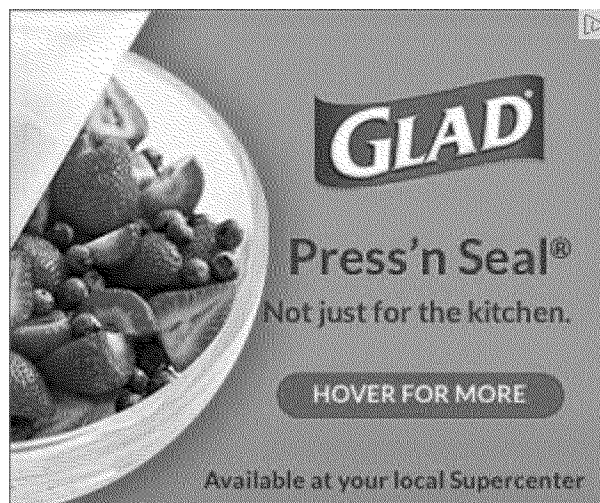
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Skipping the natural gas bridge

leaky equipment.

The Obama administration and many environmental groups support using more natural gas because it is plentiful and burns cleaner than other fossil fuels. Some environmentalists, though, argue that the benefits are outweighed by methane leaks during the production and processing of natural gas, because methane is a potent contributor to global warming.



No one doubts natural gas will play a major role in reducing carbon emissions, but how big a role and for how long depends on the industry plugging the leaks. The EPA rules are intended to make natural gas a more effective alternative to coal.

Within hours of the EPA's announcement, though, American Petroleum Institute President Jack Gerard said the rules are "duplicative, costly and undermine America's competitiveness." He said the industry is already addressing the problem and doesn't need additional government oversight.

And Leigh Thompson, environmental policy analyst at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a conservative think tank, said, "This new regulation is nothing more than a thinly veiled attack on one of the most successful industries in the nation."

The Environmental Science & Technology journal, meanwhile, published a study that day showing that U.S. natural gas facilities leak about 100 billion cubic feet of natural gas a year, eight times more than previous EPA estimates. The study focused on natural gas gathering facilities not monitored by federal officials.

That is \$300 million worth of natural gas, by the way, and is in addition to the \$1.8 billion worth of natural gas that the EPA says is lost each year to leaks and flaring, which is the burning of gas at the well because there is no capacity to capture it.

That \$2 billion could easily buy the equipment necessary to capture methane emissions, and there are 52 companies standing by in Houston that specialize in improving methane capture.

The EPA's proposals are already enforced by state authorities in Colorado and Wyoming, where operators helped negotiate them. The cost of compliance was only 0.4 percent of annual revenues, according to Colorado officials. Mark Boling, general counsel for Southwestern Energy Co., recently said the new measures paid for themselves in 12 to 15 months.

If natural gas executives try to demonize and overturn the EPA's measures, their strategy will appear to be focused only on higher profits at the expense of the environment. If they accept the rules, the sector will appear to be acting in the best interest of both shareholders and the public.

This is an important choice because energy company CEOs routinely complain about the industry's public image. Almost every executive speech I've heard in the last two years has included a passage about how the industry must do a better job of winning public support for the companies whose product make modern life possible.

"We must emphasize how the energy industry leads," Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson said at IHS CERAWeek in April. "It is our sustained efforts that enable a more efficient and safer use of environmental resources."

If U.S. oil companies need a playbook, they need only look to Europe where BP, Total, Eni and Statoil are already implementing this strategy. Ben van Beurden, Royal Dutch Shell's chief executive, called on the industry to encourage the use of natural gas and help slow climate change.

"Stereotypes that fail to see the benefits our industry brings to the world are shortsighted," van Beurden said during a speech in February. "You cannot talk credibly about lowering emissions globally if, for example, you are slow to acknowledge climate change; if you undermine calls for an effective carbon price; and if you always descend into the 'jobs versus environment' argument in the public debate."

Limiting methane emissions will be discussed at a U.N. summit on climate change later this year in Paris. European energy companies are proposing realistic and workable strategies.

Rather than oppose common-sense rules to ensure a level playing field among natural gas producers, the industry can take the lead in offering a climate-friendly fuel and supplying the

world with the most reliable, efficient and environmentally safe energy sources in human history.

That's how to guarantee an industry's popularity and its future.



Chris Tomlinson

Business Columnist

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Paxton Asks EPA to Halt Global Warming Plan

by Kiah Collier | Aug. 20, 2015 | 36 Comments

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Photo by Marjorie Kamys Cotera

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton spoke on June 22, 2105, at an event hosted by the Texas Public Policy Foundation discussing the impact of the EPA's Clean Power Plan.

General Ken Paxton on Thursday officially asked the Environmental Protection Agency to halt a sweeping plan designed to combat climate change while existing legal challenges from other states play out.

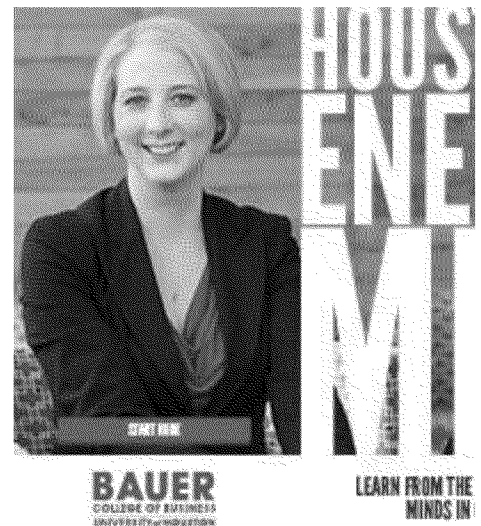
Earlier this month, President Barack Obama revealed the ultimate version of his Clean Power Plan, an unprecedented regulation designed to combat global warming by drastically reducing carbon emissions from the nation's power plants. The new protocols, which require states to submit preliminary

Editor's note:
This story has been updated with a statement from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Renewing his vow to sue if the answer is no, Texas Attorney

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by Edgar Walters and Jeremy Lin

compliance plans next year, target the more than 600 operating coal-fired power plants — the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Twenty of those are in Texas.

Several coal-dependent states already have sued over the plan. If the EPA denies Texas' request for a stay, Paxton's office said Thursday he, too, would "file suit in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit."

"The Obama Administration and EPA are attempting to take over America's electrical grid through regulation and without legal authority and Texas plans to vigorously challenge EPA's 'power grab,'" Paxton said in a statement. "Affordable, reliable electricity is the foundation of the nation's economic prosperity, but it also means comfort and security for all American families — Texas will defend its families and jobs from an overreaching federal government. Moreover, Texas has proven that you don't have to destroy industry and jobs in order to protect the environment."

Paxton previously has promised to sue over the regulations. His office already has spent \$24,000 devising a legal challenge it has yet to file, according to information obtained by the Tribune under a public records request.

But some utilities have said they hope the Lone Star State eventually will devise a compliance plan to meet the new requirements to avoid being slapped with a mystery plan devised by the EPA and to bolster regulatory certainty.

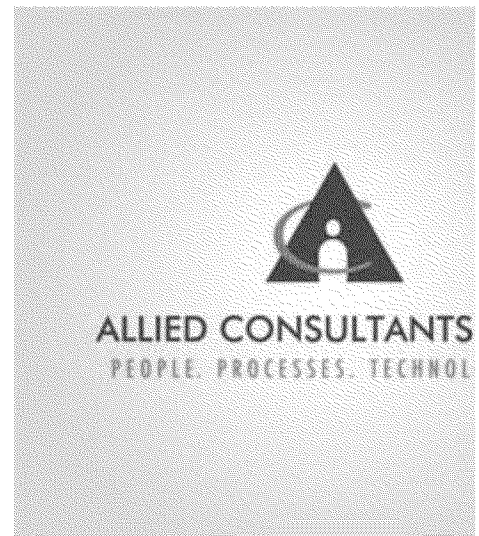
In a statement, the EPA said it would "vigorously defend" the plan in court.

"The Clean Power Plan is based on a sound legal and technical foundation, and it was shaped by extensive input from states, industry, energy regulators, health and environmental groups, and individual members of the public," the statement said. "As a result, the Clean Power Plan is fair, flexible, affordable and designed to reflect the fast-growing trend toward cleaner American energy."

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Commentary: Fossil Fuels are the Solution, Not the Problem

Posted on August 20, 2015 | By William O'Keefe

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The George C. Marshall Institute has recently released a study on fossil fuels and the economic well-being, <http://marshall.org/energy-policy/fossilfuel-energy-and-economic-wellbeing>.

It describes why energy is an essential input to economic activity. Because fossil fuels are such a large part of the world's energy supply, they play a dominant role in enabling people everywhere to enjoy a higher standard of living and greater personal freedom.

Abundant and affordable energy enables an economy to produce more and grow. If fossil fuels were made more scarce and less affordable, trade and markets would shrink. That would have with adverse effects on income and consumption. The study explains why abundant, inexpensive energy provides great advantages and is highly desirable and by implication why efforts to make fossil fuels more expensive and less available are detrimental to our economic well being.

The study acknowledges that the environment is not a free good. Consumption of fossil fuels has an environmental impact. But, the solution to that impact are not policies that impose excessive costs on their use and which attempt to force through regulation a shift to more expensive and less abundant alternatives. The study's author makes the point that "it is incorrect to think in terms of phasing out fossil fuels, and that rather their advantages and costs need to be weighed against those of other energy sources".

The Obama Administration's EPA has clearly adopted an agenda that is hostile to fossil fuels. The recent Clean Power Plant rule, proposed revisions to the ozone standard, a CAFÉ standard of 54.5 mpg by 2025, and the just announced methane standard are all intended to force a substitution to alternative forms of energy. These rules are predicated on alleged health effects and necessary action to mitigate adverse climate change.

A careful examination of science and environmental facts clearly show that these efforts by EPA are misguided and to the extent they are successful will damage our economic well being and be especially harmful to those with low and fixed incomes.

Air quality has been improving for decades and it is illogical to claim increases in adverse health effects from cleaner air. But EPA continues to do that through the magic of its models and assumptions. See the Wall Street Journal article, Confessions of a Computer Modeler, July 8, 2014.

The claims about CO2 and climate change also don't square with observations or science. CO2 is a nutrient and there is no credible evidence that higher levels are harmful. Indeed, the planet is greening as shown by satellite photos. Global temperatures have not increased in 17 years and physics demonstrates that the warming effect of CO2 diminishes with increasing atmospheric levels.

There is a strong case for balance in pursuing economic growth and environmental improvement. To paraphrase Barry Goldwater, extremism in pursuit of environmental purity is an illusion and vice not a virtue.

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In our best interest

Clean Water Rule common sense

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By Ellen McNulty and Steve Filipek Special to the Democrat-Gazette
 This article was published today at 2:39 a.m.

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Both of us grew up around water in Arkansas, one around Bayou Meto and its duck-hunting wetlands, and the other fishing the Little Maumelle River, Crooked Creek, and dozens of streams and lakes in The Natural State.

That's one of the reasons we became aquatic biologists, one with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, and the other with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. We're recently retired from those positions after working for decades and decided to join the oldest conservation organization in the state, the Arkansas Wildlife Federation, started in 1936.

Having sampled fish and water quality in many counties in Arkansas, we know that our incredible rivers, like the Buffalo and the White, are fed by dozens of small tributary streams, and lakes like Ouachita, DeGray, and Beaver bring a lot of enjoyment to Arkansans and visitors.

But Arkansas' lakes and rivers face an uncertain future. The smaller streams and wetlands that feed these waters are not protected as originally intended. Two controversial Supreme Court decisions have made it unclear if these waters are protected by the Clean Water Act. Therefore, it is not simply "federal overreach," as earlier guest writer Attorney General Leslie Rutledge opined, but extremely important to Arkansans to support the Clean Water Rule, the restoration of the Clean Water Act to its original intent.

Arkansas is a water-rich state that relies on fish and wildlife-related activities to add nearly \$2 billion to our state's economy annually.

Protecting these streams and wetlands is in our own best interest. The streams at risk provide drinking water to nearly one million people. There are nearly 400 polluting facilities located on or near these streams. Arkansas has lost 72 percent of its wetlands since the 1780s, greater than any other inland state. One acre of wetlands can store up to 1.5 million gallons of floodwater, reducing damage downstream. Wetlands are natural pollutant filters, reduce erosion, and provide water-treatment cost-savings as well as generate income. Arkansas is a premier destination for waterfowl hunting and a significant percent of fish caught by anglers use wetlands for spawning, shelter and food.

In addition, small streams that have intermittent flow make up 70 percent of the 100,000 miles of streams and rivers in Arkansas. These smaller streams don't run year-round but add significant flow to our larger rivers seasonally. Just because a stream doesn't have flow every day doesn't mean it's not important to a stream's water budget.

The Clean Water Rule provides clarification and follows a common-sense approach to water conservation. The EPA and the U.S. Corps of Engineers have been especially diligent in gathering important input from the agriculture community. Both of us have worked at state agencies and understand that, at times, agencies are not popular in the public's eyes. But EPA has done a good

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job in working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure that concerns by farmers were addressed.

The proposal actually provides an expansion of the current exemptions for normal farming, ranching and forestry practices. "Puddles" are not regulated, as some would have you believe. Period.

People our age (60+) who still remember Ohio's Cuyahoga River burning on national news are proud that we were the generation that spoke up for clean water. Before the Clean Water Act, individual states determined how to best "balance" pollution control with other concerns. This way of trying to control pollution did not work for our nation then, and it will not work for us in 2015. We need to continue to work toward clarity of the Clean Water Act as a proactive approach to protecting our water resources.

The Natural State is one of the best places in the country to enjoy the outdoors. We need to protect our most precious natural resource--water--not just for ourselves, but for our children and grandchildren. Some rivers and wetlands don't just end at the state line, and therefore a national, as well as state, perspective is needed when considering water resources. When wetlands are drained and streams are polluted, it imperils America's hunting and fishing economy--which accounts for over \$200 billion in economic activity annually and 1.5 million jobs. America's 47 million sportsmen and women rely on clean water for hunting, angling, and other outdoor recreation.

If we want clean water for generations to come, we need to support that which restores the Clean Water Act to its original intent; that of keeping water clean and healthy for humans and animals, and definitely not allow it to catch on fire again.

-----V-----

Ellen McNulty is president and Steve Filipek is outreach director of the Arkansas Wildlife Federation.

Editorial on 08/21/2015

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Everything New Orleans

New Orleans' post-Katrina repairs pose lead poisoning threat, magazine says

Mark Schleifstein, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune By Mark Schleifstein, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

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on August 20, 2015 at 3:48 PM, updated August 20, 2015 at 3:50 PM

Lead poisoning remains a threat to children in New Orleans ten years after **Hurricane Katrina**, thanks to the exposure of a new generation of children during the sanding of old paint in post-storm renovations, according to an online article published Wednesday in **National Geographic**.

Reporter Lindsey Konkel points to dramatic demographic changes in the city that have resulted in a plummet in the number of African-American children with high levels of lead in their blood.

But, she reports, the influx of young, white people to the city to help in demolition and renovation has resulted in new patterns of exposure of their children and other children to particles from lead-based paint remaining in yards or carried home on clothes.

Lead in blood is linked to lower IQs, learning disabilities, attention problems and other neurological effects.

A study led by Tulane University epidemiologist Felicia Rabito, published in 2011, found that nearly two-thirds of New Orleans homes and yards had "dangerous" levels of lead, according to federal standards.

The study found that unlike before Katrina, when those most at risk were African-American, from low-income families, and living in rental housing, the more recent high-lead readings were not linked to race or income.

Properties most likely to be contaminated with lead were homes built before 1946. Lead-based paint was banned by the federal government in 1978.

In 2011, the city of New Orleans tested a number of city parks for lead contamination and renovated several of them, placing geotextile fabric and clean soil over the old soil in areas where the lead level exceeded standards.

For more information on lead poisoning, see the **Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals fact sheet**.

To see what else the national and international media are saying about the 10th anniversary of Katrina, check out our **database of K+10 stories**. Click on the search button to see the full list, or filter by headline keyword and/or media outlet.



Everything New Orleans

Louisiana identifies tentative restoration projects for BP spill money

Mark Schleifstein, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune By Mark Schleifstein, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

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on August 19, 2015 at 6:20 PM

A tentative list of projects that would be funded by \$7.2 billion in **BP oil spill fine and settlement money**, including wetland-building **sediment diversions** from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers, **marsh creation** projects using sediment moved by pipeline from rivers and the Gulf of Mexico, and the rebuilding of nine **barrier islands** and four coastal ridges, was announced by Louisiana officials on Wednesday (Aug. 19).

In a presentation to the **Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority** at the state Capitol, authority Executive Director **Kyle Graham** said the first-look at the project strategy will likely change, based on the selection process required by the three main programs through which the oil spill money will be distributed.

"There's a tremendous amount of additional work that needs to go on before things are defined," Graham said. But he said it's important to get a first view of the state's plans before the public as early as possible.

Since much of the money will be provided to the state over at least 15 years, Graham said, the state will be considering changes in how to use the money as part of either three or four 5-year updates of its coastal Master Plan for protection and restoration.

The first update, to be considered by the Legislature in 2017, is already under way.

Graham said studies aimed at determining the effectiveness and location of the sediment diversions won't be complete until October through December of this year, at which time the staff will be asking the authority's board for additional direction.

Many of the projects listed on Wednesday have either been included in earlier lists that were proposed for funding under the various money streams, or have been included in the state's Master Plan.

CPRA's Kyle Graham on tentative restoration projects using BP spill money

Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Executive Director Kyle Graham explains the state's tentative plan for coastal restoration projects, using \$7.2 billion in BP oil spill fines and settlement payments.

The biggest chunk of money is the \$5 billion the state will receive as part of a global settlement between BP, the federal government and the Gulf Coast states for projects to be identified as part of the Oil Pollution Act's **Natural Resource Damage Assessment**.

Graham said some Gulf-wide projects that could be part of the damage assessment may have features in Louisiana that are in addition to the state's share.

He said some of the projects that are expected to be recommended are not part of the Master Plan. Instead, they're aimed at addressing damage caused by the oil spill to birds, other wildlife, or fisheries and turtles.

The federal trustees, which includes representatives of each Gulf Coast state and several federal agencies, and BP, will produce a draft Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan in October, but that document will not contain a list of proposed projects.

Once the final settlement consent decree is approved, likely in January or February 2016, the trustees and BP will agree to a "project specific tiered plan" that will include a list of proposed projects, probably in the summer of 2016.

The first payment for those projects, coming from the first of 15 years of payments from BP, is expected by February 2017, he said, and the state expects to average about \$319 million a year from that money stream.

The state has already received \$369 million in damage assessment money as part of \$1 billion BP set aside for early restoration projects before the settlement, and that money will be spent sooner.

Graham warned that some projects on the list may need more money than will be set aside under the damage assessment. In addition, he said, the state may decide to issue bonds based on the 15-year revenue stream promised by the damage assessment or other fines and settlement money and use the proceeds to pay for early design or construction costs for some projects.

The state might also pay for early costs from its share of federal offshore oil money under the **Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act**, which is expected to provide the state with as much as \$170 million a year beginning in 2017. Coastal parishes are expected to receive another \$30 million a year.

Graham said the state may use the GOMESA money as a "loan" that would be repaid from the settlement receipts, allowing the GOMESA money to be re-used for other projects later.

The "probable" damage assessment projects include:

- Orleans East Land Bridge Marsh Creation.
- Lake Borgne Marsh Creation.

- Pass-a-Loutre Restoration, a coastal ridge.
- Barataria Basin Ridge and Marsh Creation.
- Terrebonne Basin Ridge and Marsh Creation
- Mid-Barataria Diversion, a major sediment diversion project on the west side of the Mississippi.
- Racoon Island.
- Wine Island.
- New Harbor Island, now a submerged shoal just west of the Chandeleur Islands.
- Queen Bess Island.
- Cat Island/mangrove islands.
- Rabbit Island.
- Freshwater Bayou Shoreline Protection.

Louisiana will have \$1.27 billion from penalties levied against BP and Transocean, owner of the Deepwater Horizon drillship, as part of settlements of criminal charges against the two companies. That money will flow to the state as grants through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. As part of the settlement agreements filed in federal court by the two firms, Louisiana's money must be spent on either barrier islands or sediment diversions.

The "probable" foundation projects include:

- East Timbalier Island restoration. Already approved is \$6 million for engineering and design.
- Mid-Breton Diversion, a major sediment diversion project on the east side of the Mississippi. Already approved is \$40 million for engineering and design.
- Increase Atchafalaya Flow to Terrebonne Bay, a freshwater and sediment diversion project. Already approved is \$4.9 million for planning.

The foundation has also already approved:

- Caminada shoreline restoration, increment II, \$3 million for engineering and design, and \$155 million for construction.
- Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion, \$40.4 million for engineering and design.
- Mississippi River Diversions, \$13.6 million general planning money.

The state also will receive at least \$930 million for projects for civil penalties against BP and Transocean under the federal Clean Water Act, which requires the money to be funneled through the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund. The projects would have to be approved as grants from the trust fund by either the Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem Council, made up of representatives of Louisiana and the other four Gulf Coast states and six federal agencies, or the U.S. Department of Treasury.

The probable Restore Act projects include:

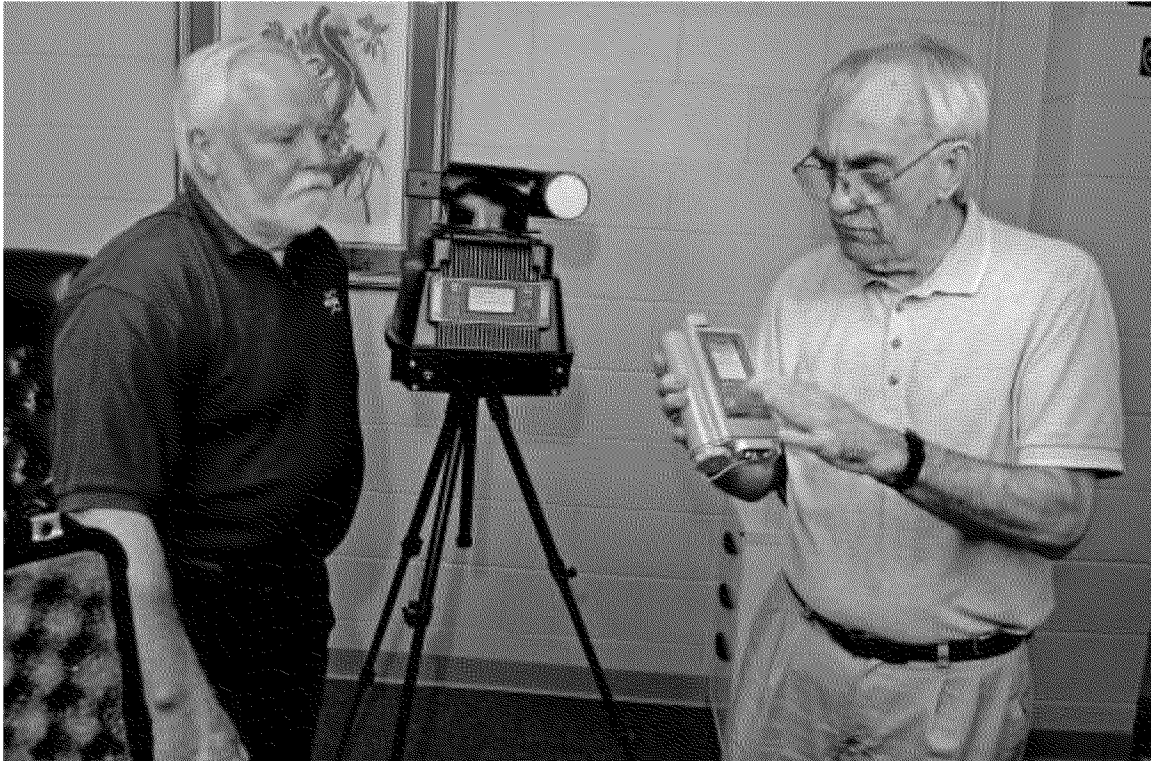
- Calcasieu Ship Channel Salinity Control Structure.
- Houma Navigation Canal Lock Hydrologic Restoration.
- Bayou Chene Hydrologic Structure, which could reduce flooding near Morgan City.
- Maurepas Diversion, which would reintroduce Mississippi River water into swamps around the lake.

- West Grand Terre Nourishment and Stabilization.
- Golden Triangle Marsh Creation.
- Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline, which uses man-made oyster reefs to protect the shoreline.
- Restoring Trinity Island West and East.

View a copy of Graham's presentation to the CPRA, below :

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Military-grade chemical detection system to help Pointe Coupee deal with possible disasters, chemical releases



Advocate staff photo by PATRICK DENNIS -- Steve Mooney, left, with Bruker Detection and George Lane, right, with Emergency Response Technology, explain how fixed and mobile sensing equipment will provide the Regional Fence Line Monitoring (RFLM) Standoff Detection and Chemical Security Network that will provide comprehensive protection against chemical threats and risks in Pointe Coupee Parish.

Technology aims to help with chemical releases, disasters

By Terry L. Jones

tjones@theadvocate.com

LIVONIA — Pointe Coupee Parish is arming itself with military-grade technology that will give its local emergency response teams the ability to detect hazardous chemical threats even before many state agencies.

That protection is being made possible through the installation of a \$300,000 chemical security network being integrated into the parish's recently upgraded 911 system.

The network, unveiled to the public Thursday, is a pet project of Police Juror Kurt Jarreau, who said the Regional Fence Line Monitoring Standoff Detection and Chemical Security Network "will enable school administrators and/or community leaders to either evacuate or shelter in place" without having to wait for directives from state agencies and local chemical companies.

"When I took office in 2008 at the parish level, I made a pledge that I would do whatever it took to put something in place to offer our school system, community and local responders the very best technologies to provide real-time response to emergencies," Jarreau said at Thursday's news conference.

His behind-the-scenes work to secure funding for the chemical alert system began four years ago after two train cars derailed in the Union Pacific Railroad freight-handling yard in Livonia, spilling nearly 700 gallons of diesel fuel. Parish officials didn't learn about the spill until nearly an hour after the trains derailed.

Jarreau praised state Sen. Rick Ward III, R-Port Allen, for playing an instrumental role in securing the state dollars needed to push the project forward.

Ward said the project remained on the top of his priority list since taking office in 2012, his main motivation being protecting the children who attend parish schools adjacent to many of the major rail lines in the parish.

The parish used a \$200,000 allocation from the state and a \$100,000 contribution from the Police Jury to finance the network's construction and installation.

"When it comes to your hometown, you want to go that extra mile to get them what they need," Ward said.

Jarreau convinced the parish Police Jury to hire George Lane, adjunct professor of Homeland Security and a principal investigator at the Naval Postgraduate School, to design and help implement the chemical security network.

In 2013, the parish conducted a Commodity Flow Study, which tracked the transport of hazardous materials by use of the parish's highways, pipelines, waterways and rail lines. Lane used data collected from the study in his recommendation the RFLM network be installed near Fire Station 41 on La. 77 — just outside Livonia city limits.

Lane's design consists of a fixed chemical detector that uses both an infrared sensor

and a video camera that will continuously scan for chemical releases within a 3.5-mile radius.

The fixed detector transmits live video footage and specific details about chemicals released, such as measurements, intensity and makeup, to the parish 911 center and to various fire stations.

“They’ll be able to visually see chemical releases and not just calculations,” Lane said. “This thing will detect chemicals as soon as they leave containers. We’ll be able to tell what the chemical is, where it’s going and where it came from.”

The system includes a portable chemical detector that confirms chemical detections picked up by the fixed network and samples air quality for officials in the field who respond to possible threats.

Officials said the software will be integrated into the parish’s 911 system in about a month.

Follow Terry Jones on Twitter, [@tjonesreporter](#).

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<http://www.mensjournal.com/travel/mountain-wilderness/coming-to-a-mine-near-you-why-another-toxic-spill-is-inevitable>
20150820

Coming to a Mine Near You: Why Another Toxic Spill Is Inevitable

The toxic spill from Gold King mine has unleashed renewed concerns that many other communities could face similar disasters.

Susan Moran, Men's Journal, provided by

MEN'S JOURNAL

Published 10:00 am, Thursday, August 20, 2015

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The milky Tang-colored waters have disappeared. Boaters have returned to the rapids. And even Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper is so sure of the potability of the Animus River, which flowed orange with toxic silt from the Gold King Mine disaster last week, that he drank a glassful. But despite all the reassurances, the long-term impacts of the spill remain unknown. Many locals, including residents of Durango, 60 miles downstream, remain skeptical. Furthermore, the toxic spill from Gold King mine has unleashed renewed concerns that many other communities could face similar disasters.

The Gold King disaster is nothing new to the West, where many towns, including Silverton, have been suffering from regular spills from acid mine drainage into creeks for more than a century. The recent

disaster stirred up such huge outrage largely because the toxins (a cocktail of lead, cadmium, zinc, pyrite, and other contaminants) were more clearly visible than usual.

"This spill stands out because it was such a big yellow-orange blob," says Mark Williams, a geography professor at the University of Colorado-Boulder who specializes in mountain hydrology and hydrochemistry. "But historically we've had numerous worse situations in the Animus River and many other places, and they're not going away."

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"Disasters Waiting to Happen"

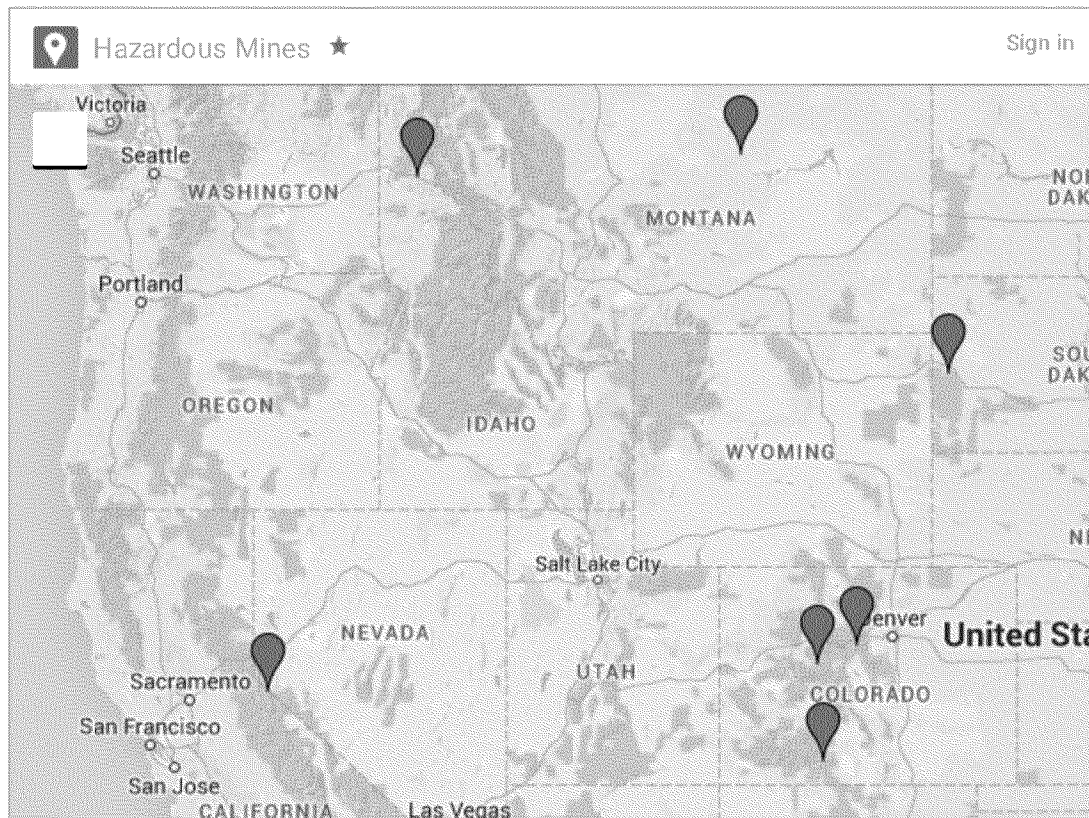
In Colorado alone there are an estimated 23,000 abandoned mines. Of those, 230 are leaking wastewater laced with heavy metals into headwaters of major rivers, according to the Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining & Safety. The contaminated waterways including stretches of the Animas, Arkansas, Eagle, Big Thompson, Gunnison, South Platte, and Uncompahgre rivers, and are clustered around historic mining towns such as Silverton, Leadville, Ouray, and Salida. These probably sound familiar: Several are hugely popular with backpackers, mountain bikers, kayakers, and skiers.

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Aspen and Crested Butte also have a long legacy of leaky mines, but they're not as vulnerable to major bursts of toxic discharge from cave-ins or roof collapses in large part because there are fewer tunnels, but also because much of their wastewater is being treated by nearby facilities.

In a worst case scenario, like the Gold King mine, an abandoned mine plugged with concrete fills with snowmelt for years. When a plug gives way, a wave of toxic water flows into the nearest watershed. More commonly, though, it's not only a catastrophic event that's endangering rivers, but the slow leakage of

toxic water.



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Throughout the U.S. West roughly 500,000 abandoned and inactive mines dot landscapes, and 40 percent of western watersheds are known to be contaminated by so-called acid mine drainage, according to Earthworks, an environmental advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. Many of them are "disasters waiting to happen," says Jennifer Krill, executive director of Earthworks. She notes that it's difficult to know how many of them could be leaking toxic water or other wastes into watersheds largely because there is no national registry of the worst mines or largest potential disasters.

The Law That Lets Companies Abandon Mines

Most towns that harbor abandoned, inactive, or even active mines are poorly equipped to tackle disasters like that of Gold King, thanks largely to an industry-friendly mining law that dates back to 1872. The law allowed hard-rock mining companies to easily set up shop by privatizing public land (for as little as \$5 an acre), then to declare bankruptcy and leave town when their mines wreak environmental havoc.

The companies are not legally required to pay royalties or other fees that would be used to help clean up polluting old mines. By contrast, coal, oil, and gas operators must pay such royalties. "Federal agencies

barely lay a finger on these companies, and they don't have resources to do it anyway," says Roger Flynn, managing attorney at Western Mining Action Project, a public interest law firm in Lyons, Colorado, and an adjunct law instructor at the University of Colorado-Boulder.

Why Locals Aren't Doing More

Communities can pursue several ways to diagnose and treat spills and other pollution from abandoned or inactive hard-rock mines in their backyard. They can create or solicit help from watchdog groups. They can also apply for funds from federal and state agencies, as well as from mining companies. But money is rarely enough to get the job done. To add to this, many communities try to keep federal agencies, and thus their funds, at bay. For example, in the mid-1990s a coalition of residents, mining companies, environmental groups, and government bodies banded together to clean up Gold King and other surrounding mines. The goal was to clean up the watershed without having the EPA declare the area a Superfund site, which would have attracted a certain notoriety. (Superfund is a federal law designed to clean up heavily polluted or contaminated sites. Once a site is designated under Superfund, only federal and tribal agencies are authorized to fund and execute the cleanup.)

William Simon, who helped start the Animus River Stakeholders Group, said many residents feared the Superfund "stigma" would collapse property values, scare tourists away, and steal jobs from locals. Simon, an ecologist, had also benefited from the go-it-alone approach; he ran an environmental remediation business and was working on cleanup of nearby mines.

Earthworks' Krill says she can appreciate how Silverton and other mining communities that depend economically on their mining history are "caught between a rock and a hard place." However, their piecemeal remediation efforts typically only have a Band-aid effect, she added. Longer-term, as Krill and many scientists and other mining experts agree, the only way to prevent more tragedies like the Gold King spill, whose contamination plume has already reached Lake Powell, is to dramatically reform the relic 187 mining law. The most promising legislation on the books so far is a bill introduced in February by Rep. Raul Grijalva (Dem, Ariz.) that would, among other things, exact royalties on companies for extraction of hard-rock minerals as well as for cleanup. A new fund would be created to pay for the estimated \$50 billion worth of remediation of abandoned hard-rock mines scattered across public lands. The bill would also give federal agencies the authority to use more discretion in issuing permits for hard-rock mining.

Last week, in the wake of the Animus River spill, Sen. Martin Heinrich (Dem, N.M.) and Sen. Tom Udall (Dem, N.M.) said that they would introduce a similar bill in the Senate. "Maybe the spill has a silver lining," said Flynn of Western Mining Action Project. "More people are realizing that the (mining) industry should not be given the free pass that it's been given."

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Well-water test results mailed to San Juan Co. residents

Posted at: 08/20/2015 11:16 AM

Updated at: 08/20/2015 12:47 PM

By: Elizabeth Reed, KOB.com

The New Mexico Environment Department on Thursday said the results of domestic well water testing are being mailed to around 570 residents of San Juan County following the Gold King Mine spill.



"We mobilized about 25 Environment Department staff in the wake of the Gold King Mine Spill for a variety of purposes, and we still have many in the field. Many of these Environment staff tested water on behalf of more than 500 domestic well owners who brought their 'walk-in' samples to the County Fair last week," Environment Department Secretary Ryan Flynn said in a statement. "Many test participants received their 'walk-in' results the same day, as they returned to the Fair to discuss them. Today, we have completed mailing out the 'walk-in' test results to all of the citizens who participated."

In a separate sampling initiative, Environment Department staff with EPA contractors took approximately 110 domestic well samples at the well locations in the Animas floodplain. Results of that more extensive testing are to be mailed to well owners via the EPA's offices in the coming weeks.

Sewer rate increases higher than expected

Conner Hammett, chammett@starlocalmedia.com | Posted: Thursday, August 20, 2015 2:13 pm

Plano water customers are likely to see a 10 percent increase to their wastewater rates starting in November, city staff members said Saturday.

The projected increase is driven by a 22 percent rate increase imposed by the city's water provider, the North Texas Municipal Water District. The increase will help pay for expenses related to EPA compliance, system improvements and debt service on capital projects.



Plano Star Courier

The cost to customers will be offset by a \$1 million transfer from the city's water and sewer reserve fund. But the increase is still the city's largest since 2012, when sewer rates went up by 14.4 percent.

"We will have more information in September," said Karen Rhodes-Whitley, the city's budget director. "The rate implementation will not happen until Nov. 1, so we will be back to talk to you more about water and sewer rates."

The council was initially told the increase would come to 2 percent. Last month, however, officials from the water district contacted city staff members to notify them of the additional increase, Rhodes-Whitley said.

The largest driving factor in the increase was the need to pay down high-ticket construction projects, including a \$300 million pipeline to move water from Lake Texoma to the Wylie Treatment Plant.

Bonds and budgets

The absorption of NTMWD costs is also driving the city's first sale of revenue bonds for water and sewer projects since 1993.

Since 1991, the city has used a "pay-as-you go" method to fund capital improvement projects. Doing so this year would cause a 30 percent increase in rates, Rhodes-Whitley said.

"We cannot go in and cash-fund \$21 million due to all the North Texas Municipal Water District contract costs that we are having to absorb," she said.

The sale, which comes to \$21.4 million, will pay for projects at Rowlett, White Rock and Prairie creeks as well as disinfection improvements at city pump stations and work on the Brown Branch sewer line.

The overall water and sewer budget for 2015-16 shows the city paying \$61.2 million to use 26.7 billion gallons of water. The city is required to purchase this amount regardless of its actual usage under the NTMWD's standard "Take or Pay" contract.

Councilman Ben Harris described a chart illustrating the cost of undelivered water – which showed the city paying for \$14.2 million in unused water as of July – as "gut-wrenching."

"We've talked about having to issue water and sewer debt for the first time since 1991," he said. "That purely is not sustainable."

Projections of the city's water and sewer rates show increases through at least 2025. Water rates are expected to go up 10 to 11 percent through 2020, while wastewater increases will continue at 13 percent for 2016-17 followed by 8 percent in 2017-18.

"The point we want to get across is, every year we're going to have rate increases on this path," Rhodes-Whitley said.

The projected increase in water rates remains at 10 percent, or up to \$2.29 per thousand gallons. The water and sewer budget will come before the council again in October, Rhodes-Whitley said.

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Food Waste And Beef Fat Will Be Making Airplanes Soar

By ABBIE FENTRESS SWANSON • 15 HOURS AGO

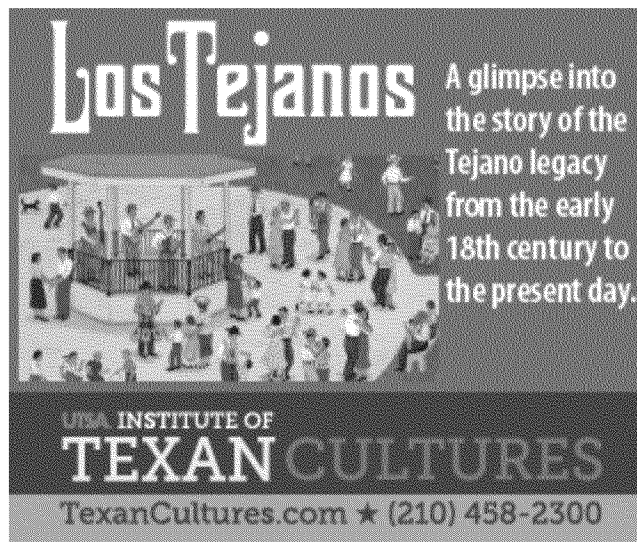
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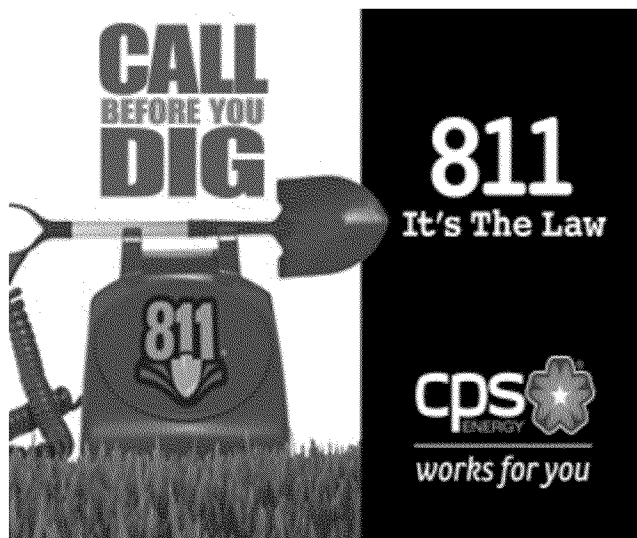
United has purchased 15 million gallons of renewable jet fuel made from beef tallow, or fat, by Alt Air Fuels and plans to use the fuel this year for Los Angeles-to-San Francisco flights.

TONY RUPPE/UNITED



What do beef tallow and manure have in common with t-shirts and pine needles? Turns out you can make high-quality, low-carbon transportation fuel with all of them. A growing number of biofuel producers are teaming up with farms, meatpackers and waste management companies to tap gassy waste to meet new demand for renewable jet fuel and diesel for vehicles.

Lots of different agricultural feedstocks (<http://www.eesi.org/topics/bioenergy-biofuels-biomass/description>) – from sugarcane to sweet potatoes — can be used in renewable fuel. But there's a bonus if you use organic waste. Methane, a super potent greenhouse gas, is released into the atmosphere as manure and food decompose. And that gas and that waste are increasingly a liability for farmers.





According to Steve Kaffka

(http://www.plantsciences.ucdavis.edu/kaffka/main/biographical_sketch.htm), director of the California Biomass Collaborative at the University of California, Davis, anaerobic digesters, which convert the waste into biogas and power, can be a good way for large farms to minimize their waste and create a value-added product from it at the same time.

Meanwhile, the transportation industry is starting to feel the heat to fill up on renewable fuels. Airlines aren't yet required to shrink their carbon footprints, but the Environmental Protection Agency is currently seeking public input

(<http://www.epa.gov/otaq/documents/aviation/420f15023.pdf>) on emissions standards that could one day apply to airlines operating in the U.S. The EPA says domestic aircraft account for 11 percent of the US transportation industry's greenhouse gas emissions, and that these emissions contribute to air pollution in the atmosphere and endanger public health.

"Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the fuel that powers our transportation is a critical part of addressing climate change. When fuel can be made out of waste into a value-added product, there can be big benefits," says an agency spokesperson.

Many airlines aren't waiting for regulations to be enacted.

United has purchased 15 million gallons of renewable jet fuel made from beef tallow, or fat, by Alt Air Fuels and plans to use the fuel this year for Los Angeles-to-San Francisco flights. The airline has also invested \$30 million in Fulcrum BioEnergy, Inc., (<http://fulcrum-bioenergy.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/2015-06-30-Fulcrum-United-Strategic-Partnership-FINAL.pdf>) which uses household garbage, including food waste, for its fuel feedstock.

FedEx and Southwest Airlines recently each bought 3 million gallons of jet fuel that will be made from forest waste by Red Rock Biofuels. FedEx has a goal to get 30 percent of its jet fuel from alternative sources by 2030. In July, UPS announced (<https://www.pressroom.ups.com/pressroom/ContentDetailsViewer.page?>

ConceptType=PressReleases&id=1438111777421-236) it would purchase 46 million gallons of renewable diesel made from used cooking oils, animal fats and algae in the next three years for its delivery trucks.

In Indiana, Fair Oaks Farms does the waste-to-fuel production itself with the help of a digester. This huge, sealed container converts half a million gallons of manure from 15,000 cows and 3,000 hogs into biogas. The biogas is captured, cleaned, compressed and odorized before being used to fuel a fleet of 42 tanker trucks that deliver Fair Oaks' milk from Michigan to Tennessee.

"We are extremely interested in converting all of our waste to a full asset instead of a liability," says Fair Oaks President Mike McCloskey. "Our goal is to sooner or later have a completely closed cycle where we're taking full advantage of sustainability."

Fulcrum claims one gallon of its renewable fuel produces 80 percent less greenhouse gas emissions than one gallon of conventionally produced petroleum-based fuels.

"There's a huge carbon savings from our process," says Rick Barraza, vice president of Fulcrum. "Airlines are looking at that and being able to show that they are reducing their carbon footprint with the fuel that they're buying from us."

But Kaffka of the California Biomass Collaborative says the industry is still struggling to measure the true carbon footprint of biofuels, and how much emissions they actually offset. "It's difficult methodologically and in part because a lot of biomass is produced under varying circumstances," Kaffka says.

Alt Air's green jet fuel (<http://www.uop.com/processing-solutions/renewables/green-jet-fuel/>) promises to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by between 65 and 85 percent. The company produces its fuel in a retrofitted asphalt factory and petroleum refinery southeast of Los Angeles with beef fat from Midwest meatpacking companies like National Beef. Its advanced hydroprocessing technology involves adding hydrogen to the tallow to remove oxygen before refining the fuel to meet stringent aircraft fuel specifications. It can then be blended at a 50-50 ratio with standard petroleum-based fuel.

Secretary Tom Vilsack of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says his agency also sees food waste and other animal products as a tremendous energy opportunity. "I have no hesitation in telling you that we will have plenty of feedstock," he said (<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2015/04/0109.xml>) in April in a speech at Michigan State University. "The challenge is figuring out how to do it, where to do it, and the most efficient way region to region to do it, and using the feedstock that makes the best sense for that particular region."